

PERS 77-1346

3 MAY 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

VIA : Deputy Director for Administration

FROM : F. W. M. Janney
Director of Personnel

SUBJECT : Comments on the EEO Panel's Recommendations re
Establishment of a Biennial Career Enhancement Profile

REFERENCE : Memo for DDCI from Chairman, DCI EEO Advisory Panel
dtd 31 Mar 77; subject: Elaboration on Panel
Recommendations re Establishment of a Biennial
Career Enhancement Profile

1. At your request, we have reviewed the recommendation to establish biennial career enhancement profiles for employees as contained in the referenced memorandum, which views such profiles as the chief mechanism to realize the benefits of a program for "Full Utilization of Skills and Training (FUST)." The objective is a worthy one and relates to enunciated Agency objectives.

2. Agency regulations specify objectives pertaining to personnel utilization both from the employee's viewpoint [] and the organization's viewpoint []. The former states the basic objective to provide employees with:

(a) opportunities for making the best use of their training and experience;

(b) avenues for employment and advancement on the basis of ability and performance;

(c) equitable pay; and

(d) an environment in which individual employees receive opportunities and job satisfaction commensurate with their individual skills, abilities, and contributions.

STAT [] states that a key principle of the personnel management system will be that of "effective and economic use of manpower resources, through systematic personnel planning, goal setting, and integration of personnel and financial management." It follows that a common ground of mutual benefit to employee and organization is that of matching employee qualifications and job requirements so that the employee is placed in the most productive available assignment. Due to imperfections in any job market, this must be more an aspiration than an absolute goal, yet when opportunities exist to improve the working of the internal job market, they should be grasped.

3. In implementing the regulations, there are now three primary tools for improving the operations of the internal job market. These are the operations of the Career Boards and Panels with respect to recommendations for assignment, the Career Service planning effort through the Personnel Development Program (PDP), and the Career Service counseling effort. [] Vacancy notices and the Staff Personnel Division play supporting roles.

STAT

4. The referenced memo does not refer to the role of the PDP nor to the role of the career boards and panels with respect to the objective of full utilization of skills and training; but it does aver, in the face of contrary evidence, that there is lack of an Agency-wide career counseling program for all employees. There is in each Career Service a counseling mechanism available to all employees; indeed a handbook listing career counselors has been published under the auspices of the Careers Committee. Further, a course on career counseling has now met more than a dozen times and has provided training to more than 150 persons.

5. It seems reasonable, having noted the role of these other elements, to disagree that the only means to achieve full utilization of skills and training is to institute a program of developing biennial career enhancement profiles for all employees. We would suggest that efforts can be strengthened in the areas of 1) board and panel actions with respect to assignments, 2) the planning input in the PDP, and 3) the counseling program. It would appear that the early availability

of CENQUAL (an improved data base on employee qualifications) would support such efforts, yet competing priorities are holding back CENQUAL to early 1979.

6. Many years ago, various components of the Agency experimented with formalized individual career planning. It was found through the experience of these efforts that there were significant difficulties encountered in this approach, particularly in terms of employee expectations that could not be resolved; the reasons are valid today:

a. Many employees do not have realistic aspiration levels; why not aspire to be Director or Office Chief?

b. Some employees seek to receive training to qualify for target jobs even though qualified candidates are already available.

c. Supervisors and counselors do not have adequate information to indicate when desired openings might realistically become available.

d. Employees may rank assignment preferences, but would not like to take lower preferences before they are assured that higher preferences are not available. (This problem is currently creating problems for State Department's open assignment program, which may be dropped or modified.)

e. Individual development efforts may not mesh with the timing when target jobs actually become available.

f. It often happens that there will be multiple candidates for an assignment (indeed, this is basic to the merit system); therefore, no competitor for an assignment can be given assurance of success.

g. Employees wish to have their preferences considered and wish to have their own initiatives recognized, but they do not like to be moved like pieces on a chessboard.

h. At times, Agency requirements must override employee preferences.

1. Circumstances outside Agency control, such as ceiling cuts, may thwart the fulfillment of employee expectations.

7. From such experience, certain conclusions may be drawn about the desirable environment for career development in the Agency:

a. Career Services should recognize employee preferences for assignment and should consider them as one input in the process of making employee assignments.

b. Competition for assignment should be encouraged, and assignment decisions should be based on selection criteria that assign high weight to the qualifications of the applicant.

c. Employees should have access to Developmental Profiles so that they know the mix of skills and experience required for advancement in their own field or for transfer to another.

d. Promising employees should be given career development opportunities (training and assignment) to assure that there will be qualified candidates for key assignments.

e. Employees should be encouraged on their own initiative to develop skills and experience pointing toward their own career targets; counseling should be available so that these efforts will be directed toward objectives with some chance of success.

f. An active upward mobility program is being developed to address the problem of employees caught up in deadend jobs or possessing the potential for more challenging assignment, given additional skills.

g. Managerial skills are a scarce resource and the continuing prospect of executive retirements requires an active program of executive development.

h. Employees who feel that they are getting stale in present assignments (too long in the job) should have the opportunity, if qualified for other assignments, to compete for such assignments.

i. Employees who are competent in present assignments and do not desire reassignment should not be shifted in assignment unless the needs of the service for field rotation or unique skills require it.

8. I feel that the mechanisms now in place are creating in the Agency an environment that satisfies these conditions. The remaining weak points are:

a. The need for improved planning with respect to skill levels in the Agency. It would vastly benefit career development in the Agency to have two-year projections of the changing skill mix in the Agency, identifying prospective shortage or surplus skill areas. This would permit early efforts to develop needed skills or to retrain individuals whose skills are becoming surplus. A longer planning horizon would be beneficial but may not be practical. No career planning for the employees, whether collectively or individually, can succeed without such projections. Improvement in this area depends upon close cooperation between the Comptroller and the Office of Personnel in assessing the impact of program changes on skill mix assortments.

b. The need for an improved system of data on employee qualifications. Such a system is CENQUAL, which must compete against more pressing priorities and is expected to be completed by early 1979.

c. The need for a mechanism to support inter-Directorate efforts in Career Counseling. Staff Personnel Division and the Careers Committee (inter-Directorate) are moving to supply this need.

d. The need to strengthen the assessment element in Career Board/Panel operations. The record here is quite uneven, with some evaluation bodies moving to develop selection criteria (for promotion and assignment) and to make careful matches between personal qualifications of employees and job requirements, while others are preoccupied with the ranking process. The newly revised regulation on promotions and new guidance from the Civil Service Commission on discriminatory selection of employees would require greater emphasis on selection criteria.

e. The need to build employee confidence in the mechanism. Some employees continue to be reluctant to use counselors; others are unaware that they exist. As great made of career counselors and as their services prove to expect that the word will spread. As noted earlier, trained counselors expands every quarter.

f. The need to enunciate policies with respect to career development. The responsibilities and the resources for career development, including the counseling effort, are vested in the Directorates. Each Deputy Director should make a strong commitment to policies to further improve the utilization of skills and training. In particular, the Deputies should make use of the Personnel Development Program as a tool to assist these policies.

9. At present, we are analyzing the Career Service responses to the employee attitudinal survey to identify possible problem areas with respect to the career management system. The data will be made available to the Career Services. Meanwhile, it would be practical and helpful to require that each Career Service incorporate in its career management program the three basic elements contained in the proposal of the HEO Panel; that is, each Career Service should:

a. assist those employees actively seeking to identify appropriate career goals,

b. provide information to employees as to the training and experience required for advancement, and

c. seek ways to enable employees to improve their present skill levels in fulfilling current job responsibilities or to adapt to changing skill mix requirements.

10. As these are presented as comments prepared in a short time frame, I have not prepared formal recommendations. Nevertheless, such recommendations are implicit in these comments and might be made explicit after further staff examination of the alternatives.

(Signed) F. W. M. Janney

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Attachment
Ref memo

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OP/P&C/PS [] (27 Apr 77) 6
Retyped: OP/Pers. [] (3 May 77)

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Approved For Release 2005/06/06 : CIA-RDP82-00357R000900090015-2

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SUBJECT: (Optional)

Comments on the EEO Panel's Recommendations re Establishment of a Biennial Career Enhancement Profile

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Chief, Plans Staff, OP
1006 AMES

EXTENSION

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14 April 1977

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

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COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

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The attached draft memo correctly observes the many difficulties inherent in any attempt to implement this suggestion. I would note furthermore that it would be very expensive to implement such a program. The EEO panel has made no estimate of the expense and I am not sure that it is my role to make such an estimate but I would guess that the total time spent in preparing an individual plan, discussing it and taking implementing steps would exceed 5 hours per person or represent in toto, 75000 manhours of effort.

To take a more constructive approach, which we did not have time to do, one would start by defining the objectives of career development in the Agency. These would subsume the objective of executive development, upward mobility, and employee counseling with respect to career development. All are presently enunciated in Agency policy statements. The objective of career planning for each employee is not included in Agency policy, and for the reasons spelled out, it probably should not be.

If the EEO panel is correct in stating that there is a lack of career counseling in the Agency, and I would disagree, why do they think the Agency can take the much more ambitious step of jumping into career planning? Let us make career counseling viable first.

Approved For Release 2005/06/06 : CIA-RDP82-00357R000900090015-2